United Nations A/53/223/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 98
Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006)

Role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

III. International support to microcredit lending

C. Specialized agencies of the United Nations

4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cooperates with microfinance institutions and other partners in designing and implementing complementary programmes aimed at helping the poor, especially women, to benefit from financial as well as social services. This involves support for the campaign to enable the maximum number of poor people, especially women, to have access to commercially viable microfinance services, through the dissemination of information to Governments on successful microfinance programmes; coordination of the participation of officials and staff of non-governmental organizations in workshops and training programmes; devising of mechanisms to provide appropriate complementary services in the fields of education, science and technology, culture and communication to beneficiaries of microfinance programmes; and promotion of micro-enterprise through innovative approaches such as the "Fashion for development" project, which was developed in cooperation with the Grameen Bank and has been extended to many countries.

2. Under the memorandum of understanding signed with the Grameen Bank, UNESCO will assist in providing education to more than 500 families in 22 training centres in Bangladesh. It will also seek to inform policy makers about the potential of microfinance in poverty eradication programmes, and to create awareness, among key government officials and banking sector managers, of the fact that microfinance requires specific lending methodologies, and administrative structures that are different from those employed in traditional development finance.

98-31589 (E) 271098